LITHUANIAN ECONOMICS MINISTER RESIGNS. International agencies on 5 July reported that Alexandras Vasiliauskas has resigned, following Prime Minister Adolfas Slezevicius request to do so because of shortcomings during his year in office. These included the failure to pass laws on the second wave of privatization and failing to promote small businesses. -- Ustina Markus, OMRI, Inc.

PROTESTERS IN VILNIUS URGE BANK BOYCOTT

VILNIUS, Jul 04, BNS - Several thousand people gathered for a protest rally on Independence Square in Vilnius on Tuesday and urged people to boycott the country's banks by taking back all deposits. The protesters demanded the creation of a "public tribunal to begin an impeachment process against the Lithuanian president the Seimas (parliament) and the government."

Speakers at the noisy two-hour rally said that an initiative group for the protection of depositors' rights last month presented a petition to the parliament, demanding to suspend by July 1 certain paragraphs of the law on commercial banks and to dismiss the head of the central bank, Kazys Ratkevicius.

Because the demands were not met, the demonstrators promised to take "extreme measures," including a bank boycott. Thousands of Lithuanian people lost millions of dollars and lits in savings over the past two years as a result of a bankruptcy wave that hit a number of quasi banks and credit companies.

After the rally, several hundred angry protesters broke through police lines and attempted to enter the parliament building but were forced back by several policemen on horseback. The crowd stood chanting "Shame, Shame!" for some time but later peacefully broke up.

LITHUANIA'S LIBERATION DAY: AUG. 31, AS OF THIS YEAR

VILNIUS, Jun 30, BNS - Marking the second anniversary of the withdrawal of the former USSR troops from the country, the Lithuanian parliament on Thursday, declared August 31 to be Lithuania's Day of Liberation, one more memorable date among the officially recognized state holidays.

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